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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time or place designated by the Chair in the legislative schedule within two legislative days of its being properly noticed.

The Chair will announce the Chair's designation at a later time. The Chair's determination as to whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege will be made at the time designated by the Chair for consideration of the resolution.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, presuming that the interpretation is that this resolution is an appropriate privileged resolution, would that mean that the resolution will have to be considered within the next two days, meaning either tomorrow or Friday?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under rule IX, the Speaker will designate a time on one of the next two legislative days to address the matter. At the designated time, the gentleman will be able to offer the resolution. The Chair cannot say how the House may consider it.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Davis).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

WOMEN OWNED BUSINESSES IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that tomorrow will be an historic day for women business owners. For the first time, women business owners from a range of professions will convene on Capitol Hill to share their stories with Members of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues. My colleague, the gentlewoman from New York [Ms. KELLY], and I will cochair this unprecedented bipartisan forum, addressing

the vast growth of women-owned firms and the contrasting poor rate of procurement to these firms.

With the procurement rate to women-owned firms at less than 2 percent, the need to explore the problems women business owners are experiencing in trying to obtain Federal contracts and to develop concrete solutions to these problems has never been greater.

Over the past decade, this country has experienced an explosion in the growth of women-owned businesses. The statistics speak for themselves. Between 1987 and 1996, the number of firms owned by women grew by 78 percent, which is almost twice the rate of increase in the number of all U.S. firms, which is 47 percent. Sales increased by 236 percent, nearly \$2.3 trillion, and employment increased by 183 percent.

In the same time period, the number of minority women-owned businesses increased by 153 percent, which is three times the rate of overall business growth in the United States, the rate of employment by minority firms grew by 276 percent, and revenues rose by 318 percent.

Between 1987 and 1996, the number of Hispanic women-owned firms grew 206 percent, the number of Asian, American Indian and Alaska native women-owned firms increased by 138 percent, and the number of African-American women-owned firms increased by 135 percent.

There are now approximately 8 million women-owned firms, providing jobs for 15.5 million people and generating nearly \$1.4 trillion in sales. Women-owned businesses now employ 35 percent more people in the United States than the Fortune 500 companies employ worldwide.

Between 1987 and 1996, the industries with the fastest rate of growth for women-owned businesses were in non-traditional fields. Women-owned firms grew by 171 percent in construction, by 157 percent in wholesale trade, by 140 percent in transportation-communications, by 130 percent in agriculture, and by 112 percent in manufacturing.

In the same period, the same phenomenon of women-owned businesses growing at the fastest rate in nontraditional fields were even more astounding among minority women-owned businesses. These firms grew by 319 percent in construction, by 276 percent in wholesale trades, and by 253 percent in transportation-communications and public utilities.

Although the number of women-owned firms has grown in every State over the past several months, they have exploded in the State that I represent. In California, from 1987 to 1996 the number of women-owned firms has grown by 78 percent, employment has increased by 255 percent and sales have grown by 313 percent. Women-owned businesses now account for more than one-third of all firms in California.

As a result, California ranks first out of the 50 States in the number of

women-owned firms, first in employment and first in sales. This unprecedented growth of women-owned firms is happening in the 37th District of California, Mr. Speaker, which is my district, generating \$105 billion in the Los Angeles-Long Beach metropolitan areas.

This area ranks second out of the top 50 metropolitan areas in the number, employment and sales of women-owned firms. That sounds promising. Maybe. But, the rate of procurement for all women-owned businesses remains a meager 1.8 percent, far below the 5 percent goal which was established in 1994 by Congress.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow this discrepancy to continue. It is only hurting the strength of this Nation's economy. We are not utilizing this hidden resource within the business community.

When the Government continues to contract with the same large companies, America's taxpayers lose money, because when various agencies select their bid without real competition, it is highly unlikely that that bid is indeed the least expensive, more effective way of getting the job done.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I speak for millions of women business owners throughout the country. I ask that we recognize that tomorrow will be an historic day for women as we continue to grapple with the notion of women business owners and the lack of procurement and meeting the goals Congress has established.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. EWING] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. EWING addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. NEUMANN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Ms. KILPATRICK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KILPATRICK addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]